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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [PINR](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)
SUBJECT: INDO-PAK TALKS ON TERRORISM AND NARCOTICS
CONCLUDED IN NEW DELHI

Classified By: Acting PolCouns Atul Keshap for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Indian Home Minister Madhukar Gupta and Pakistani Secretary of the Interior, Syed Kmal Shah, met July 2-3 for the fourth round of Home Secretary-level talks on Terrorism and Drug Trafficking as part of the continuing Composite Dialogue process. Major topics were an exchange of detained fishermen and civilian prisoners and, increased cooperation on drug control and counter-terrorism. The meeting produced a twelve point joint statement, but was cut short when Shah was forced to return to Islamabad due to the escalating stand-off between government forces and radical students at the Red Mosque. The steady, incremental progress reflects the overall flavor of Indo-Pak talks at present: slow and steady. END SUMMARY.

Fisherman Freed, Prisoners Exchanged

¶2. (U) As a gesture of goodwill, the Government of India (GOI) released 43 Pakistani prisoners, and the Government of Pakistan (GOP) released 50 Indian fishermen on the eve of the talks. According to the Joint Statement, both sides agreed to release all prisoners who had been granted consular access, had their nationalities verified and had completed their sentences by August 14-15, coinciding with Independence Day celebrations in each country. Both parties agreed to hold two meetings of the Joint Committee on Prisoners within three months to reconcile the number of prisoners on each side.

Intelligence Cooperation Expanded

¶3. (U) Gupta and Shah lauded existing cooperation between the Narcotics Control Bureau (India) and the Anti-Narcotics Force (Pakistan), and agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two agencies would be signed as soon as possible. They signaled their appreciation of the cooperation between the Central Bureau of Investigation (India) and the Federal Investigation Agency (Pakistan) on human trafficking, illegal immigration and counterfeit currency, agreeing that more could be done. Both agencies will meet periodically to facilitate early disposal of

Interpol-related cases. Both sides "strongly condemned all acts of terrorism" and underlined the need to take "effective and sustained" measures to combat terrorism on both sides of the border, but no specific plans of action were put in place.

Talks Cut Short Due to Red Mosque Clashes

¶4. (U) The talks were cut short as Shah had to rush back to Pakistan the evening of July 3 following violent clashes at the Red Mosque. The two parties quickly drew up the Joint Statement before the Shah's departure, leaving it up to the Indian side to announce it solo on July 4.

Some Progress, But Not On the Big Issues

¶5. (C) Comment: While deliverables, with the exception of the prisoner exchange, were mostly symbolic, the fact is India and Pakistan again met within the framework of the Composite Dialogue. The tone for these talks continues on a positive trend, even if the most problematic issues between New Delhi and Islamabad remain off the table. Indian media treated this with one day of straightforward coverage, another positive trend, before focusing again on the Red Mosque problem. The bottom line for US. interests is that India and Pakistan continue to work together to resolve their lingering issues, clearing away underbrush which, in the past, would have risked igniting fires. As such, these talks reflect the flavor of the relationship: slow and steady End comment.
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